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Message Text

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ACTION EUR-25

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 EURE-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-07 H-03

INR-10 L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-10 PA-04 RSC-01 PRS-01 SPC-03

SS-20 USIA-15 ACDA-19 IO-14 NEA-10 TRSE-00 SAJ-01

NIC-01 OMB-01 DRC-01 /150 W
---------- 080471
P 261305Z NOV 73
FM AMEMBASSY STOCKHOLM
TO SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 1051

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E.O. 11652: N/A
TAGS: PFOR, SW
SUBJECT: OPTIMISTIC ASSESSMENT OF WACHTMEISTER CALL ON SECRETARY

REF: STATE 231280

1. SWEDISH PRESS (AND NUMEROUS MEMBERS OF OFFICIALDOM, COMMENTING PRIVATELY) JUMPED INSTANTANEOUSLY TO CONCLUSION THAT SECRETARY RECEIVING WACHTMEISTER SIGNALED THE END OF YEARLONG FREEZE IN SWEDISH-AMERICAN RELATIONS. MEDIA SPECULATION, INCLUDING REPORTS FROM WASHINGTON CORRESPONDENTS, CENTERS ON EXPECTATION THAT AMBASSADORS WILL BE APPOINTED BY THE TWO GOVERNMENTS IN EARLY 1974.

2. WACHTMEISTER APPARENTLY HAS SO FAR GIVEN NO BACKGROUNDING TO SWEDISH CORRESPONDENTS ON HIS MEETINGS WITH SECRETARY AND STOESSEL. HOWEVER, DAGENS NYHETER GOSSIP COLUMNIST CLAIMS TO HAVE LEARNED FROM "EXTRAORDINARILY AUTHORITATIVE SOURCE" THAT NOT ONE WORD ON BILATERAL RELATIONS WAS EXCHANGED BETWEEN SECRETARY AND WACHTMEISTER. COLUMNIST GOES ON TO ASSUME, HOWEVER, THAT "FREEZE" IS OVER AND SAYS GOS HOPES NEW ENVOYS WILL BOTH BE BUSINESSLIKE PROFESSIONAL DIPLOMATS. HE TIPS WACHTMEISTER AS FITTING THAT BILL FOR SWEDEN.
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3. SWEDISH TV DID A SATURDAY NIGHT SPECIAL REVIEWING SWEDISH-US RELATIONS WITH THE CONCLUSION THAT THE FREEZE IS ABOUT OVER. PROGRAM CARRIED ON "ITS-ABOUT-TIME" OVERTONE, WHICH IS THE GENERAL REACTION HERE, INCLUDING IN ANTI-GOVERNMENT QUARTERS. ONE SUCH QUARTER - THE CONSERVATIVE SVENSKA DAGBLADET - SAID TO-DAY THAT WACHTMEISTER VISIT SEEMED TO POINT TO AN EARLY EXCHANGE OF AMBASSADORS AND "A LENGTHY - AND UNNECESSARY - CHILLING OF DIPLOMATIC RELATIONS ALMOST TO ZERO POINT WOULD THEREBY BE AT AN END." EDITORIAL SAID PRESIDENT "OVERREACTED" TO PALME'S CHRISTMAS 1972 STATEMENT, BUT IT CHARGED PRIME MINISTER AND FORMER FOREIGN MINISTER WICKMAN WITH HANDLING THE SITUATION INEPTLY.
IT CREDITED NEW FOREIGN MINISTER ANDERSSON WITH CHANGING THE ATMOSPHERE IN BILATERAL RELATIONS.

4. COMMENT: GOS, ANXIOUS TO AVOID ANY GAFFES WHICH COULD POISON THE ATMOSPHERE, IS TRYING TO SAY AS LITTLE AS POSSIBLE ON SUB-JECT. MFA OFFICIALS, HOWEVER, DO NOT HIDE THEIR SATISFACTION WITH WACHTMEISTER'S SUCCESS.
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